

# "STUFF"

A play in two acts

By Jim Reyland

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equal the world (15)

## **The cast**

### **Milton Stack:**

Mid 40's, intelligent, rough around the edges, cigarette smoking, blue-collar, physically strong, caring and famous for offering amazing insights and spinning giant yarns about relatives real and imagined. He's subject to random outburst both vocal and physical. A nurturing soul, friends are important to him, things are not. He likes words that begin with G, the color crimson and a good joke.

### **Bobby Warren:**

Late 30's, black and unmarried, Bobby lives alone in a trailer and likes collecting things. He's a protector, troublemaker and hot head. At first you think he's smarter than Milton. But just as Milton surprises with flashes of brilliance, Bobby amazes with his cerebral deficiencies. He likes the three stooges, the color orange and management by intimidation.

## **PROP REQUIREMENTS**

A large wardrobe, a baseball bat, a trash cart, a small antique case with confederate money, an antique radio, a chrome car mirror, two envelopes with letters, a fancy lamp, a red wig and some string, a box of books, a large clock that runs four times the normal speed, and stuff.

**ACT ONE**

**PLACE:**

A 1920's era theater.

**AT RISING:**

Stuff fills the darkened stage including a large wardrobe and a fancy antique lamp. A large clock running four times speed, reads nine o'clock. Milton runs into stuff in the dark.

**MILTON**

Shit! Who put that there?

**BOBBY**

Stay where you're at, I'm coming to ya.

**MILTON**

You don't have to come for me.

**BOBBY**

Don't have to do nothing, I told about feeling sorry for yourself.

BOBBY runs into the wardrobe.

Shit! Who put that there? Milton stay there I'm looking for you.

BOBBY finds MILTON.

Where you been?

**MILTON**

Taking a leak.

MILTON and BOBBY enter into dim light wearing work clothes with a trash cart.

**BOBBY**

I didn't see no bathroom.

**MILTON**

I started one.

(Angry)

Don't tell me I can't piss!

**BOBBY**

Can't tell you nothing.

**MILTON**

It's gonna rain.

**BOBBY**

Might as well get started.

**MILTON**

(Upset)

They got some hot in here Bobby.

**BOBBY**

It's OK genius I got you. Son of bitch Gary!

**MILTON**

Son of a bitch Gary!

**BOBBY**

Sending us single file into the shit again.

**MILTON**

Who's Gary?

**BOBBY**

You remember, from the truck this morning.

(Pause)

I bet we walked a mile pushing this cart Milton.

**MILTON**

We walked a mile in the rain.

**BOBBY**

You must be thinking about last week.

**MILTON**

That was last week.

**BOBBY**

That sister at that soup kitchen didn't give us no breakfast because she said we smelled.

**MILTON**

We do.

**BOBBY**

Dragging this shovel tired and hot; it's hotter than hell's hinges.

**MILTON**

Oh Mrs. Doo-mar it's hot.

BOBBY finds a Louisville Slugger baseball bat and strikes a batters pose.

**BOBBY**

When I get drafted by the Columbia Mules, I'm gonna find me a fan with nothing to do but cool me off.

**MILTON**

Every winter they don't call and every spring you're another year too old.

**BOBBY**

Rod Carew played at forty, he's in the hall of fame.

**MILTON**

He started when he was eighteen you haven't started yet.

**BOBBY**

But I'm ready, and I got the look! You know I got the look!

BOBBY poses with the baseball bat.  
MILTON trips the light panel; the full stage lights come up. MILTON double takes looking at the massive junk.

**MILTON**

Bobby? I wouldn't turn around.

BOBBY stands frozen in mid pose.

**BOBBY**

You got something back there you don't want me to see; don't tell me not to look when you know I got the look.

Bobby turns slowly.

Oh Shit! Shit. That ain't nothing; I seen worse piles of junk on "The Price Is Right!"

**MILTON**

Bob Barker is a sloppy bastard. We did one worse in, in?

**BOBBY**

In the army, everyday.

**MILTON**

With one hand in my pocket.

MILTON puts his hand deep into his pocket.

**BOBBY**

Milton, I do believe that you like that too much.

(Audience)

Before the army had that don't ask don't tell, Milton was going around telling everybody.

BOBBY grabs the bat and storms off.

Come on Milton lets go. Too much hot and too much stuff to fool with here.

MILTON holds a manila envelope with MULES written in large block letters. BOBBY stops when MILTON calls to him.

**MILTON**

This came for you.

BOBBY returns to MILTON who gives the envelope to BOBBY, he stares at it.

Somebody took the time to write it; don't you want to see what it says?

**BOBBY**

(Audience)

Milton was always thinking of others. He didn't care what they thought about his predicament. Live and let live, that's what he thought.

BOBBY rips open the envelope, looks at it and then hands it back to MILTON.

What's it say?

**MILTON**

Dear Mules.

**BOBBY**

Now it don't say dear mules!

**MILTON**

That's what it says.

**BOBBY**

A mule is a lazy, greasy, four-legged smelly bag a shit!

**MILTON**

A mule is stubborn too.

**BOBBY**

Should we take that as a compliment?

**MILTON**

Gary on the truck called us mules this morning.

**BOBBY**

He's called us lots of things. Milton how many time I told you to get your head outta your ass, quit listening to an asshole?

**MILTON**

One time.

**BOBBY**

What else does it say?

**MILTON**

That we're working for a man named Price, and he wants us to clear all the stuff of this stage so he can "renovate."

**BOBBY**

What's that renovate?

**MILTON**

It's like fixing up. He wants us to clear it all by tonight so he can renovate tomorrow.

**BOBBY**

(Amused)

Well that ain't gonna happen.

**MILTON**

If we can't, he'll get some men down here that can.

**BOBBY**

Listen to me; he don't make no shit-clearing deadline without us!

**MILTON**

He says he does.

**BOBBY**

The name calling bitch can come down here and say it to my face or we're not only gonna leave but we're gonna kick somebody's ass before we go!

**MILTON**

I'm sorry Bobby!

**BOBBY**

I ain't talking about you Milton.

**MILTON**

Wanna hear the rest?

**BOBBY**

I heard all I want to hear; don't want to hear no more.

(Loud)

What?

**MILTON**

Mr. Price has a family heirloom he left down here he wants us to keep safe for him.

MILTON points to an antique lamp.

That's it over yonder.

**BOBBY**

Where?

**MILTON**

That fancy lamp there.

(Reading)

If we take care of his lamp and get the rest of this stuff out by tonight, we can keep anything in here we want.

**BOBBY**

Who said that?

**MILTON**

Mr. Price. It's all written down here.

BOBBY goes through boxes looking at objects, and then picks up the lamp.

**BOBBY**

What do you suppose is so fancy bout this lamp?

**MILTON**

Maybe it belonged to his grandmother.

**BOBBY**

She must have had her a whorehouse then.

BOBBY drops the lamp MILTON catches it. BOBBY moves on to other stuff.

What do we have here? Ain't got one, I could sure use this. Milton I'm thinking maybe we should do this job?

**MILTON**

I don't know it's a lot of stuff.

**BOBBY**

We can do it! Come on, we'll take all this stuff and put it in my trailer.

**MILTON**

(Amused)

That won't work.

**BOBBY**

I got a big trailer.

**MILTON**

It's nice but it's only what, twenty-five by fifty, and eight feet high? That's ten thousand cubic feet by volume. You got a hundred thousand cubic feet of stuff in here; it won't fit in your trailer.

**BOBBY**

(Audience)

I already thought of that; I'm gonna put my TV outside.

**MILTON**

My cousin Janie Lynn Wallace got a whole pile of stuff real quick one time, after that her life sucked.

**BOBBY**

Don't worry Milton; I got you, now and always.

**MILTON**

It really started after she bought some of those plastic "Appliqués," you know the round ones with sunflowers on them from the Walgreen's?

**BOBBY**

What do we got here?

**MILTON**

So Janie Lynn gets the idea to glue those "appliqués" to the seats of some wooden chairs she got from the Wal-Mart.

**BOBBY**

I ain't got one of these.

**MILTON**

She's gluing and applying, gluing and applying and then she gets tired and sits down.

(Pause)

Bobby, I know what you're thinking. Now don't ask me how but some of that glue also spilled on the floor. So now that chair was stuck to her butt and to the floor.

**BOBBY**

I could sure use this.

**MILTON**

The good news was she was pointed at the TV and it was on.

MILTON gets agitated and upset.

What a sight, butt stuck to a chair, stuck to the floor when all of a sudden there come up a bad cloud; a big bad ball busting cloud! The kind of scary bastard where if you weren't already stuck to a chair you might want to be stuck under a table with your knees knocking, your head in a wash bucket. Bobby. Bobby! A storm so fierce a grown man might want to call out for his Momma, Momma! Even if his momma was dead!

**BOBBY**

Milton, don't go Milton.

**MILTON**

And because of that storm, instead of getting a hundred and forty seven channels on the cable, she only got one.

**BOBBY**

(To audience)

One of those twenty-four hour shopping channels.

**MILTON**

It was chiffon robes and socket wrenches till Clark got home.

**BOBBY**

Who the hell is Clark?

**MILTON**

Her husband.

**BOBBY**

Since when? I told you, you got to let me know when you go introducing new characters.

**MILTON**

It's my episode Bobby.

**BOBBY**

I can't keep up with you man.

**MILTON**

Don't get mad, it's my, it's my story.

BOBBY hints to the audience.

**BOBBY**

You're making me look bad.

MILTON blanks out, mumbles, and wanders crying, barely understandable.

Milton, what's wrong with you? We got company.

(Audience)

Sometimes his brain turns off. Don't worry it comes back on. Milton, he used to be real smart, in the army we called him genius. He could say back to you what he read from a book. Add big numbers together. Tell you what happened a long time ago. He was amazing. Then there was a bad accident, but he won't tell you about that, will you Milton? It wasn't nobodies fault, none of us could see up or down from the rain and the black night and the fog. We was on a training mission, climbing a wall, a wall Milton had climbed a million times before, only this time he comes down on his head. He was all bloody and tore up, sad.

**MILTON**

(Singing)

It's raining, it's pouring the old man is snoring.

**BOBBY**

Milton!

**MILTON**

He bumped his head, went to bed and didn't get up till morning.

BOBBY picks up the baseball bat.

**BOBBY**

Come here. It's OK genius.

(Audience)

You notice anything funny about Milton? You know the gay thing? Some people won't tell you but they would rather he not be that way. They don't understand that thing, makes em' uncomfortable. And some folks if they got sideways on it, was having a bad day, might want to hurt that thing.

(Pause)

Check this out. I said come here!

MILTON doesn't respond so BOBBY crosses and speaks into MILTON'S ear.

You know she was butt stuck to a chair, stuck to the floor with only the shopping channel when she got a fancy letter saying congratulations here's your shiny new gold card with...

MILTON wakes up and begins speaking along with BOBBY.

**MILTON**

Congratulations, here's your shiny new gold card with no credit limit and 12 months to pay.

**BOBBY**

What did she do then Milton?

**MILTON**

Well, for a while everything was all right cause they were having a show on Star Trek shit and Janie Lynn hated that damn show. But then came the "Nick-Knacks," and before Janie Lynn knew it she was covered up with them damn little clay children from every nation. She just sat there and bought and bought and bought some more, she was hooked!

**BOBBY**

They have a twelve-step program for that now.

**MILTON**

Well it was lucky they didn't have them twelve steps on the shopping channel cause she would have bought every one of them and the house that goes with em!

**BOBBY**

And the UPS man?

**MILTON**

The UPS man made so many trips to her house that her youngest started calling him Daddy.

**BOBBY**

And he was.

**MILTON**

According to some members of the neighborhood watch. Her house got so full Clark moved to Foley to live with his secretary. It took Janie Lynn three years to pay her credit card. Having stuff doesn't always make you happy. It's true.

**BOBBY**

And I belong to the Belle Meade Country Club. I told you, keep telling them stories and somebody's gonna beat you down!

**MILTON**

You don't have to worry. You don't have to worry about me.

**BOBBY**

Did you say that I ain't got to worry about you?

**MILTON**

Huh huh.

**BOBBY**

Well then tell me who the hell I got to worry about?

**MILTON**

You ain't got to get mad, you're always getting mad.

**BOBBY**

No I don't. Now what about it Milton!

**BOBBY** turns his back in frustration.

You wanna clear this place?

MILTON slaps BOBBY on the back of his head. BOBBY shakes it off like it's happened before and turns slowly.

You want to keep this stuff or not?

**MILTON**

I don't know.

**BOBBY**

Come on Milton.

**MILTON**

Let's take a meeting.

**BOBBY**

A meeting?

**MILTON**

Come on Bobby.

MILTON and BOBBY take a Paper-Rock Scissors meeting and BOBBY wins.

**BOBBY**

You can smell us and tell us and send us to the store, we'll just spank ya and thank ya and carry out some more.

**MILTON**

Roses are red, violets are violet, Andy's from Mayberry, not from Mt. Pilot.

**BOBBY**

I got a pocket full posies and a ring around my ass.

MILTON spots a car mirror and wants to show it to MILTON.

The girls call me long fellow! Damn, what do we got here? No sir, don't have one.

BOBBY shows MILTON his reflection. MILTON shies away. MILTON finds a Polaroid camera. MILTON takes it from the box and meticulously sets it up on a shelf facing the stuff. MILTON first reads about, and then sets the

auto timer as BOBBY talks about his dad's car.

Pure chrome, this mirror was born on a sixty-two Belair. My Dad had this car. He had his own bakery too, so it smelled like cinnamon sugar on the inside, cherry red, white leather seats, smooth as vanilla icing.

**MILTON**

My Uncle Small sold used cars in Fairhope Alabama.

**BOBBY**

A car like that would stop you. Even if you were just riding down the road thinking about nothing, you'd stop yourself when you realized you were sitting in such a fine car.

**MILTON**

If you're daddy still had it, my uncle could sell it for him.

**BOBBY**

He's got nothing he's dead. Besides, the day the bank came to get it, he drove it into the Mississippi river. It was a damn shame drowning that Belair, except I got the mirror now.

BOBBY notices the camera.

What you got? You gonna keep that?

**MILTON**

Maybe, it still has film in it. Come on; let's take a picture with the trash.

**BOBBY**

How they going to tell which is which?

**MILTON**

It's got a micro automatic timer clock on it. In the book it says you wind it, stand back and it takes your picture for you, no charge.

MILTON winds the camera they pose.

They wait and the camera doesn't fire.

Smile big.

**BOBBY**

How long I got to stand here?

**MILTON**

Till the micro automatic timer goes off.

**BOBBY**

How long is that?

**MILTON**

A minute.

**BOBBY**

A whole minute!

BOBBY tries to get away.

A minute feels like an hour when you're hugging a man.

**MILTON**

Get your hand off my ass.

**BOBBY**

Now that ain't funny.

The camera flashes as BOBBY makes a fist and threatens to hit MILTON.

**MILTON**

One more.

BOBBY stop and mugs for the camera. It flashes again. MILTON retrieves the camera and pulls the negative.

**BOBBY**

Let me see.

**MILTON**

You have to wait. Pictures are like friendships they take time to develop.

BOBBY takes a long look around.

**BOBBY**

A damn litterbug owns this place all right.

**MILTON**

And sometimes you let it develop and you think it's a good one, and it's just not.

**BOBBY**

When we get done, I'll show em that picture; show em how we do things here in Tennessee.

**MILTON**

My father moved our family to the Deep South when I was eight. I'll show em how we do things in Alabama.

**BOBBY**

(Amused)

I'd find another way if I was you.

**MILTON**

He said there were too many black people in South Carolina.

**BOBBY**

(Sarcastic)

Like they ain't no Black people in Alabama.

**MILTON**

He had some trouble with the law. After we got down there, a train killed him and my momma, just sitting in their car. My Aunt and Uncle already lived in Fairhope.

**BOBBY**

Lucky you.

**MILTON**

Fairhope was a quiet town till some big city writer called it the top place in America people should move, and they did; brought along their poverty and street gangs.

**BOBBY**

When we got progress in Memphis, we put our urban blight and street gangs on a bus and sent em right to Fairhope.

MILTON acts like he might hit BOBBY.

**MILTON**

Son of a bitch.

**BOBBY**

Shut up.

(Pause)

Milton, the only thing moving on this stage is that clock. If we want to clear this place by tonight we need a plan.

**MILTON**

What plan?

**BOBBY**

A shit-moving plan! We take all the shit we don't want and we throw it outside for the trash. Then, we take all the shit I want and we put it in this pile here.

BOBBY takes a piece of cardboard and misspells his name.

**MILTON**

That's not how you spell Bobby.

**BOBBY**

Don't care. Then; where we gonna put your shit?

**MILTON**

Don't want any.

**BOBBY**

That's all right; cause I got enough shit both of us.

MILTON shows BOBBY the pictures.

Look at you genius.

**MILTON**

There you are.

**BOBBY**

I'm right next to you.

**MILTON**

I look good.

**BOBBY**

Ugly as a bull dog backing up!

Upset, MILTON begins to work.

**MILTON**

Least I know what's wrong with me.

**BOBBY**

But you ain't sure are ya?

**MILTON**

Momma said; if you don't have anything nice to say, shut up!

BOBBY opens an antique box.

**BOBBY**

Well now that I know your Momma and your Daddy,

(Pause)

I wonder what I got here. No, don't have one. Milton come here I ain't got any of these.

**MILTON**

What is it?

**BOBBY**

I thought you might tell me.

**MILTON**

You saw it first.

**BOBBY**

Now I'm showing it to you.

MILTON and BOBBY stop look in the box then at each other and jump for joy.

**MILTON & BOBBY**

We're rich we're rich . . . We're rich we're rich.

**BOBBY**

You're the rich one.

**MILTON**

Don't stare at me because I got money.

MILTON puts on his glasses and looks inside the box. His face saddens and his speech slows.

**BOBBY**

The man's got him some money.

**MILTON**

I got it, I got money; I got.

**BOBBY**

What's the matter Milton? Don't quit on me now! That's a box full of money ain't it?

**MILTON**

Yeah.

**BOBBY**

We're rich we're rich . . . we're rich we're rich.

**MILTON**

But look.

**BOBBY**

Stop right their genius! Let's think about this.

(Pause)

Right now at least one of us still believes he's stinking rich.

**MILTON**

One of us.

**BOBBY**

Well don't you think he should go on thinking that a little while longer?

**MILTON**

But...

**BOBBY**

Huh?

**MILTON**

Sounds reasonable.

**BOBBY**

(Excited)

OK, what you gonna do with your half?

**MILTON**

I need some new shoes.

**BOBBY**

Shoes? You got to think bigger than that! How much money we talking about? You got big money in that box right?

MILTON looks at a bill.

**MILTON**

Well, it's kind of big.

**BOBBY**

Big Money! I got it, we'll name a whole tennis shoe after you; call it the Milton. You know how much money Michael Jordan gets for a tennis shoe, a hundred dollars, each. Come on let me here you, we're rich we're rich! We're rich?

BOBBY celebrates; MILTON goes through the motions till reality sets in for BOBBY. MILTON holds up a bill.

**MILTON**

No.

**BOBBY**

This is payback for that bulldog thing ain't it?

**MILTON**

Bobby there's a mule and a guy who looks like Hank Williams on here; these are Confederate bills, they're worthless.

**BOBBY**

Are you sure?

**MILTON**

You can take them over to the "Mapco" and see what they say but I'm pretty sure. The Civil War's been over for more than a hundred and fifty years and these guys lost.

**BOBBY**

They sure looked good to me.

**MILTON**

Me too.

**BOBBY**

I guess we better save em though, them Confederates might make a comeback.

MILTON looks closer at the bill.

**MILTON**

"Confederate Dry Cleaning, we go to war on your stains, ten percent off." It's a coupon.

**BOBBY**

Dressed up like a hundred dollars.

**MILTON**

I think I recognize this mule on here.

**BOBBY**

Lazy, four-legged bag a shit.

**MILTON**

My Uncle had a picture of my great, great grand daddy standing by a mule like this during the war, working his land on the Alabama coast.

**BOBBY**

(Hurt/angry)

Probably had some slaves working it too.

**MILTON**

He was gray, gray as a man gets.

**BOBBY**

Too much gray and you get black!

**MILTON**

He was a man of the time, he didn't know any better.

**BOBBY**

Didn't want to know? My family lived as slaves.

**MILTON**

Under his roof.

**BOBBY**

Covered by an angry sky.

**MILTON**

It was common and right to own one.

**BOBBY**

But it weren't right to be one.

(Pause)

When the war was over they gave my grandfather forty acres and a mule.

(Pause)

He worked it all by himself.

**MILTON**

Get away from me man.

**BOBBY**

You're afraid to admit you did shit you ain't proud of.

**MILTON**

I didn't do anything.

**BOBBY**

Come on let me hear you say you're sorry.

**MILTON**

What for?

**BOBBY**

Apologize to that black family living in the burned out tenement, to their ancestors for putting them up on blocks and selling them in the square.

**MILTON**

I apologize for nothing. It wasn't me selling anymore than it was you up on that block. Besides, the war changed everything.

**BOBBY**

(Audience)

Oh it was good for old Bobby Warren that they had that Civil War. Otherwise all these years later I might just be a poor black man living in a trailer, with no education, never knowing nothing but lifting this, hauling that. If it weren't for that war I might not have a future. I would be spending my life doing dirty, nasty, filthy backbreaking hard degrading work, work nobody else wants to do.

(Pause)

The only difference between me and them slaves is that they're dead and I'm just dying.

**MILTON**

When mules get going in a rut, they hate to be messed with.

(Pause)

Look at the big picture.

**BOBBY**

Why should I, I ain't in it.

**MILTON**

(Upset)

They got poor white people too! Even been to stinking mill town South Carolina? The houses all looked the same, the people too, tired, worn down by modern day slavery! It don't care if you're black or white. Grandfather, father and son, three generations making sheets for the Klan!

**BOBBY**

Say man!

**MILTON**

I was just checking to see if you were paying attention.

**BOBBY**

I'm paying attention but I ain't buying anymore of your Bullshit! You know we're living in a white mans world.

**MILTON**

I read that six out of ten people on the planet are Asian, so statistically it's a yellow mans world.

**BOBBY**

Keep it up and I'll kick your ass!

MILTON escapes returns to cheer BOBBY up.

**MILTON**

Mrs. Doo-mar, lend me a penny cause I don't have no sense.

**BOBBY**

Shut up!

**MILTON**

Bobby, did I tell you about my Uncle Small? He didn't have any slaves.

**BOBBY**

You ain't got an Uncle Small. No Aunt Tiny or Cousin Jumbo neither.

**MILTON**

I don't?

**BOBBY**

No.

**MILTON**

Then who paved my great Granddaddy's land on Magnolia Street in Fairhope and put up a used car lot?

**BOBBY**

Milton how long I know you?

**MILTON**

Fifty years?

**BOBBY**

Six years in the army, on the outside five and how many times I tell you that your stupid things and silly stories will get you in trouble?

**MILTON**

I don't remember. But this one time my Aunt Mini took the train to visit her sister Ruth in Mobile. Well no sooner had that train turned the corner to a memory than my Uncle Small had him a white lightning brainstorm.

BOBBY nips at his flask.

**BOBBY**

A drinking man is a thinking man.

**MILTON**

He took some water paint and spelled out 333-C.A.R.S in big white letters on both doors of my Aunt's red '63 Rambler.

**BOBBY**

I told you don't talk Milton.

BOBBY walks to MILTON who runs as he tells his story hiding to avoid BOBBY.

**MILTON**

Then he goes and borrows Wade Simpson's monster crane and hoisted it up to the top of a fifty-foot pole! He said it was so people once they got over the shock of seeing that rambler up on top of a fifty-foot pole might call my Uncle and see about buying a used car.

**BOBBY**

I'm talking to you Mr. Green Jeans.

MILTON is caught between BOBBY and some stuff. BOBBY takes swipes at MILTON.

**MILTON**

Well after a month my Aunt was coming home and my uncle went to hoist that car back down, but Mr. Simpson's crane got stuck. Now old man Simpson went on to explain that there were times he couldn't get it up but never the other way around.

**BOBBY**

I don't need to know about that.

**MILTON**

Mr. Simpson called down to Atlanta to get the part but it was six weeks on back order. By then my Aunt Mimi came home from her sisters and figured something was up when my uncle picked her up in a city bus.

**BOBBY**

Come here you silly bastard.

**MILTON**

Since my aunt's rambler had spent a month fifty feet up in the Alabama summertime, by the time they got it down the sun had faded the paint everywhere except where the numbers were.

**BOBBY**

You're supposed to be helping me.

**MILTON**

When they washed off the paint there it was, 333-C.A.R.S.

BOBBY finally gets to MILTON grabbing him by the neck.

**BOBBY**

What's wrong with you man?

**MILTON**

It was the first portable billboard in Fairhope.

(Afraid)

I'm sorry I wasted your time.

**BOBBY**

Then why do you do it?

**MILTON**

I'm wasting my time too.

**BOBBY**

You don't want to do this do you? All you wanna do is hold me back, keep me from getting my stuff, wearing me out with your weak ass family.

**MILTON**

Relatives can be strange animals.

**BOBBY**

Like a polecat with a face from a razorback hog?

**MILTON**

It's a figure of speech. Like where you take an image of something and you exaggerate it.

**BOBBY**

That's what you do.

**MILTON**

Make it bigger than it is.

BOBBY spots an old dress rack.

**BOBBY**

Don't have one of these.

**MILTON**

Cause you don't understand it.

BOBBY holds a dress to himself.

**BOBBY**

Check it out Milton. How do I look?

**MILTON**

"Shall I compare thee to a summers day? Thou art more lovely and more temperate: Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, and summers lease has all to short a date."

**BOBBY**

Fuck you.

**MILTON**

Shakespeare.

**BOBBY**

Go stand over there.

(Pause)

I took Aphelia, who is big in parts, to one of them fancy uptown shopping stores in Memphis, and you know what that tight-ass, lily lipped, sissy fellah sales clerk walking two feet from the ground said to my girl?

**MILTON**

No.

**BOBBY**

I think we can find your size, if we sew two together.

(Mad)

I picked up a wire hanger and I cracked his majesty across his melon head! From now on that queer gonna be sharpening pencils for a living.

**MILTON**

"By chance of natures changing course, untrimmed."

**BOBBY**

People don't fuck with you if they know you're strong! In the army, strength was power.

MILTON bends to pick up a heavy box.

**MILTON**

In the army, the strong would push you down.

MILTON falls backward, the box pinning him on his back to the floor.

**BOBBY**

In the army, the powerful made sure you stayed there.

BOBBY stands over him smiling.

It ain't time for a nap.

BOBBY helps MILTON to his feet. MILTON gets up grabbing his back.

**MILTON**

I don't see you moving anything.

**BOBBY**

Moving shit rule number one, don't pick up stuff leaning over, no wonder your backs screwed up. Bend at the knees then lift with your legs.

BOBBY demonstrates on a small box, handing it to MILTON.

See? It's common sense.

**MILTON**

Common sense?

**BOBBY**

Like closing your eyes before you sneeze so your eyeballs don't pop out of your head.

**MILTON**

That would hurt.

**BOBBY**

Don't open a beer bottles with your teeth or stand behind no mule. Chew your food a hundred times and no matter what, never run with the scissors. There's a lot, I ain't got time to tell you all of it right now.

**MILTON**

Why do they call it common sense?

**BOBBY**

Cause everybody knows it, everybody but you.

**MILTON**

I'm sorry Bobby.

**BOBBY**

Milton listen to me; you have to be careful what you tell folks about yourself, you know what I'm talking about?

**MILTON**

I think so.

**BOBBY**

(Audience)

You never know what folks got in their hearts. People make hard judgments about you, it ain't right but they do it.

**MILTON**

Can I tell em I'm from Alabama?

**BOBBY**

When someone goes to shake your hand you shake it real hard, look em in the eye, don't be afraid to give it a good grip. You never know when a person is looking to see if you're strong; so it's best to be strong all the time. Watch out for yourself, cause it could be there's nobody else watching.

**MILTON**

Paul Bear Bryant, the coach at the University of Alabama used to say, "When you got trouble, don't hide behind anything or anybody, trouble will find you anyway."

**BOBBY**

I say, if you can't count on your friends, what you gonna do?

**MILTON**

When the Bear was a football player at Alabama, he won a whole game against Tennessee with a broken leg!

**BOBBY**

The Bear was a big damn liar! Alabama don't beat Tennessee with every limb working!

**MILTON**

That's Bullshit!

**BOBBY**

That's right, Bullshit!

**MILTON**

I believe in Bear Bryant, his descendants and the mighty "Roll Tide" experience. What do you think of that?

MILTON shows a large "BAMA" tattoo.

Alabama college football is the greatest program in the history of athletics.

**BOBBY**

What about Tennessee and the mighty Volunteer nation?

**MILTON**

I'm talking about "Professional" college football!

**BOBBY**

At Tennessee, football is more important than real life.

**MILTON**

And a whole lot more orange too.

**BOBBY**

From the tip of my toes all the way up to my rocky top.

**MILTON**

You can't wear orange with anything except more orange. After a while, that can be frightening.

**BOBBY**

Three hundred and sixty four days a year we can be friends, but on a single Saturday come the fall, colors collide!

**MILTON**

Orange and Crimson will never go together.

**BOBBY**

Big Orange!

**MILTON**

Damn pumpkin heads! Roll Tide!

BOBBY and MILTON break off and storm in separate directions, calming down.

**BOBBY**

My daddy used to paint me orange, make me watch Tennessee football every Saturday afternoon; re-runs in the summertime.

(Pause)

What happen to you?

**MILTON**

After I moved to Alabama, there I was, not even thinking about it, I found out that I liked Alabama football and that I was a homosexual all at the same time.

**BOBBY**

How did you find that out?

**MILTON**

My uncle told me.

**BOBBY**

How did he know?

**MILTON**

He said if I liked Alabama football, I should like Alabama Cheerleaders in their tight white cotton sweaters, I didn't. I was the only admitted homosexual in Fairhope. Folks mostly just stayed away from me, so I went to Mobile and joined the army. I was doing fine till I fell and hurt my head.

MILTON holds his head with a headache.

**MILTON**

(Chants)

I don't know but I've been told men like us are getting old  
. . . Sound off... three four... sound off...

**BOBBY**

(Audience)

Milton was so damn smart; I tell you we called him genius?

**MILTON**

(Chants)

Sound off; bring it on down, three four...

**BOBBY**

(Audience)

Him and me we've been traveling around since we got out, living here, living there doing odd jobs. I like to practice my baseball; Milton's been working on remembering stuff.

**MILTON**

(Chants)

Slaking off will get you killed in a great big muddy field.

**BOBBY**

(Audience)

This morning we went down to labor source; got there late, they didn't have nothing. Then we heard they might be hiring day workers downtown on Broadway near the arena.

**MILTON**

(Chants)

In the Army we all know different ain't a way to go.

**BOBBY**

(Audience)

When we got down there, there was a few men, one hard looking woman and a man yelling from the back of a red pick-up truck, "I got work, you wanna work let's go!" Milton and me seen lots of pick-up trucks but this morning the man yelling from this one was Gary.

MILTON runs and hides.

**MILTON**

Tell him I'm not here.

**BOBBY**

(Audience)

In the army we knew him as Sergeant Gary. When he saw me he said it was lucky I was still so strong cause there wasn't nothing waiting for me outside the army other than a hard days work.

MILTON is agitated, marching out.

**MILTON**

(Chants)

Sound off, one two three four . . .

**BOBBY**

(Audience)

Can you believe that shit? We hadn't seen that bastard since we got out and there he was on Broadway.

**MILTON**

(Chants)

Left, left, left, right, left . . .

**BOBBY**

(Audience)

Gary used to call me and Milton, Black Judas and the rain man! You remember that Milton? In a small way, I was glad to see him again.

**MILTON**

(Upset)

My mules eat dirt and piss mud and thank me! My mules will do what I tell them or I'll be forced to tell the truth! You aren't smart enough to move your mouths and your muscles at the same time!

**BOBBY**

(Audience)

Sergeant Gary, not a day different today than the first time we laid eyes on him;

**MILTON**

Why don't you go out and play with the other girls?

**BOBBY**

(Audience)

He's still got a devil in his heart and a hole in his soul. Somebody should whip his ass with his own arm.

**MILTON**

You aren't right you aren't natural!

**BOBBY**

(Audience)

If Sergeant Gary didn't like you, for your nature or for your color, you couldn't hide from the fear; couldn't run from the threat. Coming or going, walking or crawling he'd put one on you! There was nothing you could do except take it or fight. Milton didn't like him much.

MILTON walks up behind BOBBY and slaps him in the back of the head.

Son of a bitch!

BOBBY turns in anger, sees MILTON standing passive and is defused.

**BOBBY**

Did you Milton?

**MILTON**

Hand me that stuff there. I'm hungry, you hungry?

MILTON grabs stuff and carries it off the stage. BOBBY calls after him.

**BOBBY**

We ain't got time to eat. You don't want the money from this stuff do ya? Tell the truth don't lie to me.

BOBBY discovers a large wardrobe.

Well, what do I got here; I could use this. Yes sir, put a lot of stuff in here. Hello, anybody home?

BOBBY walks into the wardrobe, the door closes behind him and he gets locked inside. BOBBY shakes it from inside.

**BOBBY**

I got a big problem Milton; can you hear me? I didn't mean what I said, come get me. Milton!

BOBBY is knocking frantically.

Get me out of here!

MILTON re-enters, looks around and calls out for BOBBY.

**MILTON**

Bobby? Bobby?

MILTON notices the wardrobe shaking walks up and listens at the door.

There's a crazy man inside this box?

**BOBBY**

You know it's me! Get me the hell out of here!

**MILTON**

(Amused)

Coming out of the closet is a personal decision.

The shaking stops, BOBBY is quieter.

**BOBBY**

Milton, there's no air in here. It's so dark I can't see my ass. This is no time to be messing with me. Oh shit!

Smoke pours from the wardrobe.

**MILTON**

I smell smoke.

**BOBBY**

I started a fire so I could see; now I can't see!

**MILTON**

OK. See you in a minute then.

BOBBY breaks down door and rolls out  
and MILTON tries to help.

**BOBBY**

Get away from me.

**MILTON**

OK.

**BOBBY**

(Ignoring MILTON)

Bobby's not home right now, at the sound of the tone leave  
a message, ass hole.

BOBBY is coughing from smoke, MILTON  
hands him a cigarette. BOBBY and MILTON  
light up. MILTON picks up the end of a  
kite string and starts to pull it.

**MILTON**

What do we have here? No don't have one.

(Pause)

How long have you been smoking?

**BOBBY**

Shut up.

(Pause)

Twelve, I got started young.

**MILTON**

Twelve, that's nothing, I was three years old.

**BOBBY**

Three?

**MILTON**

So help me Mrs. Doo-mar!

**BOBBY**

That's too damn young!

**MILTON**

Tell my Uncle Dinky. He was my mother's half brother on her father's side. Uncle Dinky would stand me up on a table, light up what he liked to call a "Tobacco tootsie roll," and make me puff on that lucky showing off for his friends. Smoke coming out of my ears; they called me "The Incredible Smoking Baby."

**BOBBY**

Damn.

**MILTON**

By the time I was eight I had a pack a day habit and could blow a smoke ring clear across the room. I could spit too!

**BOBBY**

What do you suppose your uncle was trying to teach a little boy with shit like that?

**MILTON**

No matter what you think, we're all alone in the world.

MILTON is pulling the string; BOBBY takes it and pulls it himself.

**BOBBY**

You ain't getting nowhere with that. Stand aside, could be Moby Dick on the line.

**MILTON**

That's what I like about you Bobby, you set your mind to something, and it gets done.

**BOBBY**

Is that a half a mind or a whole mind?

**MILTON**

With some people it's a half a mind, but you got such a big head, I bet you're bringing the whole damn thing.

BOBBY keeps pulling on the string.

**BOBBY**

This bitch is heavy.

**MILTON**

If you listen to your mind you can hear it talking to you.

**BOBBY**

What does your mind say?

**MILTON**

Catch up with a cheeseburger cause my ass is hungry.

**BOBBY**

Your mind said that? I thought that was your stomach talking?

**MILTON**

Who do you think tells your stomach? It's not your liver; it's your mind. It talks and you listen.

BOBBY puts a hand on MILTON'S head.

**BOBBY**

It's awful quiet.

**MILTON**

You can't hear it, only me.

**BOBBY**

How come?

**MILTON**

Cause it's my mind. You ever heard the expression "They got a mind of their own?"

**BOBBY**

What's your mind saying right now?

**MILTON**

You don't care.

**BOBBY**

Yes I do, my mind is blank and I'm lonely.

The string hits a snag.

Oh shit, the bastard is fighting back! Get that chair genius. Hold on baby! Daddy's got a frying pan!

MILTON brings a chair and they fight the string like deep-sea fisherman.

**MILTON**

Give em hell Bobby! You got it!

**BOBBY**

I ain't got shit; this son of a bitch is bigger than me!  
Get my knife! Hurry up. Whatever it is, it's pissed off.

**MILTON**

If you cut her loose you'll never get to the other end,  
could be something good there, I bet you ain't got one.

**BOBBY**

Oh shit!

BOBBY gives a mighty tug on the string  
breaking it, sending them to the floor.

**MILTON**

You OK?

**BOBBY**

Milton why is it every time you help me, it hurts? Don't  
help me no more.

MILTON pulls a wad of tangled string  
attached to a red wig from the junk.

**MILTON**

See, I told you; you don't have one of these. Remind you of  
anything?

MILTON puts the wig on and poses for  
BOBBY trying to cheer him up. BOBBY  
gets up and dusts himself off.

**BOBBY**

It reminds me of a gay man with a red wig. Get away from me.

**MILTON**

That isn't it, come on think about it.

**BOBBY**

I'm trying not to!

**MILTON**

Come on Bobby.

(Pause)

The "Amazing Maureen?"

**BOBBY**

Shit!

**MILTON**

Saturday night, we'd get a pass and to go into town. You liked it; get a good meal and get a good feel.

**BOBBY**

Milton of all the shit you forgot, you remembered that freak?

**MILTON**

We'd hang out at that carnival with the Amazing Maureen.

BOBBY gets into the memory.

**BOBBY**

The bitch would take your money.

**MILTON**

Read your mind.

(Pause)

Guess your weight.

**BOBBY**

The hard way!

**MILTON**

You had a crush on her too.

**BOBBY**

Could be?

(Pause)

She had an ass that belonged in a museum.

**MILTON**

Red hair and green eyes; had an anchor tattoo on her starboard side.

**BOBBY**

Four color. The first time I saw her I said that is fine as wine and I need a drink.

**MILTON**

See, your mind told you that.

**BOBBY**

My mind told my Dick, my Dick told me.

BOBBY steps on the string. MILTON walks away the wig pops off MILTON'S head.

What else do you remember about the Amazing Maureen?

**MILTON**

That's all.

**BOBBY**

Are you sure about that?

**MILTON**

I think so.

BOBBY finds some small boxes containing old books. BOBBY throws them one by one to MILTON who throws them off stage.

**BOBBY**

That's good.

**MILTON**

That's all.

**BOBBY**

Leave it there.

**MILTON**

Except that one night when you came back to the base and told us that the Amazing Maureen was really the Amazing Mike!

**BOBBY**

That was unfortunate.

(Pause)

How long did the two of you date?

**MILTON**

We were so different.

**BOBBY**

(Amused)

We sure have gotten into to some stuff.

MILTON drops a box and it breaks open, he pulls out a book and reads it.

**MILTON**

I wish I remembered more of it.

**BOBBY**

I think you remember what you care to.

(Pause)

What time is it?

**MILTON**

Twelve noon.

**BOBBY**

Wasting time, dropping stuff breaking shit.

BOBBY throws the rest of MILTON'S boxes and books into the wings. MILTON holds his single copy.

**MILTON**

(Reading)

Listen to this, "Dr. Zip Rogers, world famous psychologist has helped one million Americans overcome their fear of inadequate adequacies, insufficient sufficiency's and unsuitable suitability's."

**BOBBY**

Where does it say that?

**MILTON**

It's just like you and me, right here in black and white.

(Reading)

"Pull the sun right up over your covers and make a new day out of an old tomorrow."

**BOBBY**

My Daddy started fires with that shit.

**MILTON**

(Reading)

"When life gets complicated, don't simplify your dreams."

**BOBBY**

He couldn't abide folks needing help. That's why when he needed some; he just went ahead and died.

**MILTON**

Dr. Zip says, "Meet the dawn with unlimited potential and the promise of never ending opportunities."

MILTON tosses the book to Bobby.

**BOBBY**

What am I supposed to do with this?

**MILTON**

Start a fire. Or learn how to read it? I'll help you.

**BOBBY**

Don't need to. I'll watch it on TV.

(Audience)

The other day on Oprah, they had some doctors hypnotizing the audience all the way back to their childhood. You know what they found out? That their parent had screwed em up. Then the next day on the show, they brought in some lawyers and they sued the parents for malpractice.

(Shouts to Milton)

We should try that with you Milton?

(Audience)

If they hypnotized me, I'd tell some good and bad, some funny and some sad. I'd tell em fat lies too, fat as the pigs on my uncle's farm. My uncle had pigs and cows and chickens and shit on that farm, lots of shit, I think it was a shit farm. I was stepping in it everywhere, everything I did; there was no making my daddy happy. "Daddy, I'm sorry it won't happen again. I didn't mean to mess up the barn. I'll clean it right now, don't hit me sir." We lived off my uncle when daddy's Bakery went under. My dad invented the triple-decker donut? All I wanted was to be his little man, his son, his boy. He couldn't see nothing but his pride, and his pain. "I didn't mean to break your medicine bottle, I'll clean it up. Momma will get you another one."

MILTON walks up behind BOBBY, raises his hand to slap the back of his head. BOBBY catches MILTON'S hand before he can hit him.

**BOBBY**

Please don't hit me no more.

**MILTON**

When we got to Alabama, my sister and me had all we wanted, but we'd give it back for a whipping or a hug.

**BOBBY**

We were so poor we barely had trash.

BOBBY holds an old wooden frame up to the light, looking through it.

If you never seen such a wonderful frame, made from handsome wood and fine detail, you'd might hold it up to the light and say, "This is for that picture of my Momma."

**MILTON**

If you're lucky enough to have a picture of your Momma, it doesn't need a frame.

**BOBBY**

(Audience)

I'd stand out in left field and watch down the road to see if my father would show up for my game. The coach be yelling, "Get in the game Bobby Warren." This one time I saw him, walking up the road with a busy walk, he stayed ten minutes and went back to work.

BOBBY pulls an envelope from his pocket and shows it to MILTON.

If he had stayed around I'd show him this, then he'd take it back, he'd take it all back.

MILTON opens the letter and reads it.

**MILTON**

This letter is from the Columbia Mules, inviting you to tryout for the team. It's dated five years ago.

**BOBBY**

I thought it might be something like that. You think it's too late?

There's a loud commotion in the hall.

**PIZZA MAN**

(Off stage)

Hello, pizza man.

BOBBY yells out to them.

**BOBBY**

What do you want?

**PIZZA MAN**

(Off stage)

I have a pizza. Is this the Alexander residence?

**BOBBY**

Can't you see we're having a damn epiphany in here? We didn't order no . . .

**MILTON**

Wait Bobby, I'm hungry.

BOBBY looks around, picks up the Civil War coupons and exits to the wings.

**BOBBY**

Cold pizza, we ordered a hot pizza, come here boy.

(Loud from the wings)

Here you go, and a little extra for your Momma and your sister and your brother and one, two, three for you from me.

BOBBY enters with some pizza boxes.

**MILTON**

Hurry up.

**BOBBY**

I'm coming genius. Man, somebody is stupid.

**MILTON**

Did you know that when you deliver pizza you get Thanksgiving off? My cousin Jimmy Narrow delivered pizza till he was fifty-one; it killed his momma.

**BOBBY**

Did she die of disappointment?

**MILTON**

No, high cholesterol!

BOBBY and MILTON share a laugh.

**BOBBY**

Give me some of that.

**MILTON**

I'll take some too.

BOBBY and MILTON eat pizza fast, they start to get full and slow down.

**BOBBY**

Milton you think them TV doctors was right?

**MILTON**

About what?

**BOBBY**

That maybe our parents left us with more than just their names to carry with us.

**MILTON**

You mean like if your momma was a worrier?

**BOBBY**

You'd be a worrier too.

**MILTON**

Or if your daddy had a quick temper; could be.

**BOBBY**

What if your momma likes to tell stories?

**MILTON**

Yeah.

(Pause)

My dad liked to take me shopping at department stores.

**BOBBY**

(Amused)

You get all kind of stuff you don't need when you go shopping with your dad.

**MILTON**

The store was so big it had three levels with a fountain all the way to the top.

**BOBBY**

One of those stores with everything and nothing; Momma said stores like that had everything and nothing.

**MILTON**

When we got inside, past the drunken Santa Claus, daddy bent down and said, "Son, you stay here with the nice ladies behind the perfume counter and I'll be right back."

**BOBBY**

He just left you all alone?

(Hard)

Were you afraid?

**MILTON**

When they came in it was late. There's no place on earth any darker than barracks in the middle of the night. You know what I'm talking about?

**BOBBY**

Were you afraid?

**MILTON**

We were out with the Amazing Maureen. I came back by myself, drunk again. The rain and the wind blowing; you could feel that storm coming in your bones. "Hey guys, what are you doing here? I'm dog tired, I gotta hit the sack."

**BOBBY**

Sometimes people don't know why they do what they do.

**MILTON**

There was two, maybe three of them. I couldn't see; just an outline when lightning flashed through the window.

**BOBBY**

In the dark, you can't see what you're looking at.

**MILTON**

"Have you guys been drinking?" They laughed; they were yelling and pushing me, mad at something. "Why are you doing this? What did I do?"

**BOBBY**

Don't tell stories again now? I told you about that. Milton! The department store; what about your daddy?

**MILTON**

(Calm)

My daddy left me alone. After a while a tall man in a suit came up and asked my name. "My name is Milton, Milton Stack, I'm eight years old." I wanted to know, where my daddy is. He said, "Your daddy is busy son," he was taking me to see my momma. We walked through the store, then down a long hallway, the kind of hallway when you say your name it comes back to you - Milton, Milton. At the end was a large gray metal door with a sign that spelled "S.E.C.U.R.I.T.Y." We went inside this little room and there was my momma, sitting on a wooden chair under a clock.

**BOBBY**

What time was it?

**MILTON**

Three thirty. She looked sad. When she saw me she got up real fast but took my hand real slow and said softly, "come on son we're going home." She looked down at me with those big brown eyes, tears flowing on her cheeks; I had never seen my momma cry before.

MILTON changes tone.

I never hurt anyone, never said nothing. They were screaming, swearing, calling names. Slapping me in the face, the thunder was raging outside. "No! I don't know why, you tell me!" They held me down, kicked me in the stomach, put duck tape over my mouth. They said I didn't belong in a man's army. Put my head in the toilet. Spit on me!

**BOBBY**

When it gets rolling on that hill it's hard to stop.

**MILTON**

(Calm)

My momma wiped my eyes with her white cotton dress, she pulled me from that room, through that metal door into the hallway, we left daddy behind and we went home.

**BOBBY**

It's safe at home with your momma. What happened to your dad?

**MILTON**

My uncle told me the same day he told me he thought I was queer. He said it didn't surprise him one bit when he heard about it.

**BOBBY**

What?

**MILTON**

That my father had exposed himself to a stranger in the casual department.

**BOBBY**

Man, your daddy gave some woman a free look?

**MILTON**

No.

**BOBBY**

Good, cause that kind of shit could really mess a little boy up.

**MILTON**

He gave some man a free look.

**BOBBY**

Mess him up good.

**MILTON**

You know Bobby; since I fell I haven't remembered some things?

**BOBBY**

Don't you think it's better for some stuff to be left gone?

**MILTON**

Some stuff better left unsaid.

**BOBBY**

It's better lost until you're dead.

Lights

**ACT TWO**

**AT RISING:**

The same theater space it's now mid afternoon.

Stuff fills half the stage. BOBBY and MILTON nap with pizza boxes scattered around. The large clock on the wall reads three o'clock as they wake up. MILTON notices the clock.

**MILTON**

Three o'clock, Bobby get up!

(Pause)

I'm thirsty.

**BOBBY**

I can't work when I'm thirsty.

(Pause)

I got water in my jar outside.

**MILTON**

Go get it.

MILTON tries to hand BOBBY stuff.

Take this with you.

**BOBBY**

You get it.

**MILTON**

Where is it?

**BOBBY**

You'll see it.

MILTON exits with the stuff and BOBBY calls after him.

Where did you put my towel?

**MILTON**

It's over yonder.

**BOBBY**

Huh huh.

BOBBY, waking up, picks through stuff unable to find his towel. MILTON re-enters with a jar of water.

**MILTON**

When you're someplace, everywhere you ain't is over yonder.

**BOBBY**

If I'm here and you're there, which one of us is over yonder?

**MILTON**

I'm over yonder here and you're over yonder there.

**BOBBY**

Where the hell is my towel?

**MILTON**

It's on that box.

(Pause)

Over yonder.

BOBBY gets his towel, takes a drink of water and delivers a poem.

**BOBBY**

(Audience)

"I swear I never heard him, I looked up and there he stood, a large man with some pizza, so I ate them and they were good!" I'm gonna have my own book one day.

**MILTON**

Better learn to read one first.

**BOBBY**

Just cause I never learned to read don't make me dumb.

**MILTON**

That's not what I said.

MILTON picks up the fancy lamp,  
holding it upside down.

**BOBBY**

First, I learned to survive; then everything else. Hey,  
back away from the fancy lamp!

**MILTON**

I don't know what the big deal is? My Aunt Tiny had a  
fancier one than this. It had the University of Alabama  
shinning though rose colored chiffon with brass platted  
hard pieces. It was like a sunset.

**BOBBY**

If you break that lamp, we got nothing. Give me to me, nice  
and slow.

**MILTON**

I'm looking at it right now; it isn't yours anyway.

BOBBY begins to chase MILTON still  
holding the lamp around the boxes.

**BOBBY**

I'll show you what's mine.

**MILTON**

Don't want to see that.

**BOBBY**

If you don't give me that lamp, I'll show what I got!

MILTON comes around the other side,  
puts down the lamp and picks up a  
broom chasing BOBBY in the other  
direction.

**MILTON**

I'll spear your ass.

**BOBBY**

Oh yeah! Well then I have no choice but to set the plague on your butt and watch your ass shrivel up and blow away.

**MILTON**

OK then, how about I put your ass in my trash compactor and push your ass side to side till there's nothing left of your ass but a square ass.

**BOBBY**

Are you talking about my ass?

**MILTON**

Your ass?

**BOBBY**

I got a steamroller at my trailer and I will flatten your ass out, roll you up and smoke your ass.

**MILTON**

Oh no you won't because I'll get me some electric lines and plug your butt in and fry your ass up.

**BOBBY**

I ever told you about that pack of Pitt-bulls I got? I'll sick em on you till there ain't nothing left but a Fart.

**MILTON**

Oh yeah!

**BOBBY**

You bet your ass!

MILTON and BOBBY wrestle. MILTON pins BOBBY to the floor and they stop.

**MILTON**

I think we're alone now.

**BOBBY**

You better not try anything funny.

**MILTON**

If you were my type you'd already be mine.

**BOBBY**

Don't you fool around like that!

BOBBY leaps to his feet.

**MILTON**

Fuck you!

**BOBBY**

Fuck me? Fuck you! Cause if you can't find the crack in your ass, then you better drill a hole, cause I ain't gonna listen to no more of that crap coming out of your mouth!

As MILTON gets up he holds his back.

What's wrong now?

**MILTON**

It's my back.

**BOBBY**

We ain't gonna make it less you suck it up and go genius.

**MILTON**

I need my back for that. It isn't easy getting old.

**BOBBY**

We're all getting old, we all got problems.

**MILTON**

Everybody else causes my problems.

**BOBBY**

Shit.

**MILTON**

When you're different, people treat you different.

**BOBBY**

Are you talking bout the gay thing?

(Pause)

It ain't easier being black and you don't catch me crying.

**MILTON**

But I'm not there in the middle of the night when your heart is pounding and your mind is flying so I can't say. Besides, I don't see color.

**BOBBY**

Everybody sees color, everybody sees different. Prejudice has been around so long it comes out in all of us in little ways.

**MILTON**

Us? It's everybody else, not us.

**BOBBY**

We got it too.

**MILTON**

I don't have it!

**BOBBY**

Prejudice is like a bad itch in the middle of your back, you know it's there but you can't see it.

(Pause)

It's hard to reach and it's annoying as hell.

**MILTON**

You mean I got it in me and I got it on me?

**BOBBY**

I see prejudice in the kindest faces.

**MILTON**

Who's talking shit now?

**BOBBY**

It's like, polite prejudice, being uptight around somebody who's different from you. All the time smiling, thinking, wondering why ain't they like us? What should I do? What should I say?

**MILTON**

There's a lot more of that against gay people than blacks.

**BOBBY**

What planet are you from man?

**MILTON**

Everybody knows gay people are more oppressed than blacks.

**BOBBY**

Who said that?

**MILTON**

Truman Capote!

**BOBBY**

No kidding, the great civil rights leader?

**MILTON**

That's the one.

**BOBBY**

Then why are blacks cleaning up boardrooms but they ain't sitting round the table? Everybody else in there is gay!

**MILTON**

That's cause nobody knows which ones we are.

**BOBBY**

Unless you come out and tell em.

**MILTON**

Otherwise they just guess.

**BOBBY**

When was the last time a gay person had to use separate bathrooms and drinking fountains, sit at the back of the bus?

**MILTON**

It's coming.

**BOBBY**

How many gay people living with drugs in public housing?

**MILTON**

Gays got their own neighborhoods too.

**BOBBY**

They choose to live there, blacks ain't got a choice.

(Pause)

OK Milton you're walking down the street and a group of young black kids are coming down the sidewalk the other way, what do you do?

**MILTON**

I cross the street before I get to em.

**BOBBY**

Polite prejudice! You don't know those kids.

**MILTON**

I'd do the same if they were Asian kids, or Mexican or from Chicago. In my world I'm careful.

**BOBBY**

Milton? What class of people coming the other way wouldn't threaten you?

**MILTON**

A ballet class.

**BOBBY**

So it's different that scares you?

**MILTON**

It's where I've been; it's where I'm going that scares me. It's my daddy and my uncle; it's you that scares me Bobby!

**BOBBY**

Congratulations Milton, everybody you're so damn scared of you're just like em.

**MILTON**

I'm not feeling too good.

**BOBBY**

You think I don't know you? Hell I am you genius. I'm your hurt and your fear; your everything lost and never had a chance.

(Pause)

Why do you think we ended up together? Of all the people in all the armies why do you think it's me holding you up?

**MILTON**

It's been on my mind.

**BOBBY**

It's a trick Milton, the truth is I'm leaning on you, and we ain't going nowhere less we get there together.

**MILTON**

Like two people that can't, equal one that can?

**BOBBY**

I know your hearts is in the right place, even if your hormones ain't. Help me with this.

MILTON drops his end of a heavy box.

What you drop it for?

**MILTON**

Damn, Mrs. Doo-mar I cut myself. This old hand's been cut so many times it forgets to bleed.

BOBBY backs away from MILTON.

There it goes.

**BOBBY**

They still got that blood sickness going around, killing folks in your category.

**MILTON**

HIV?

**BOBBY**

Yeah that.

**MILTON**

You thought I might be HIV because of the gay thing?

**BOBBY**

You can't blame me for thinking.

**MILTON**

I see prejudice in the kindest faces.

MILTON using his knees picks up the same large crate and drags it to the edge of the stage by himself.

**BOBBY**

We need to get you some gloves.

**MILTON**

This shit belongs outside.

MILTON drags the crate outside.

**BOBBY**

You want me to help you?

**MILTON**

No.

**BOBBY**

OK, we're all alone in the world, no matter what you think.

BOBBY throws things aside and discovers an antique radio.

Look at you you can't hide from me. Come here bitch.

He bangs on the radio, shakes it but can't get it to work, a moment later MILTON re-enters.

**MILTON**

I told you, it's raining.

BOBBY covers the radio in an attempt to hide it from MILTON.

**BOBBY**

Nothing I can do about that.

**MILTON**

Nobodies asking you to.

**BOBBY**

Wouldn't do nothing if I could.

**MILTON**

You can't.

**BOBBY**

You don't know what I can do.

**MILTON**

(Amused)

I know you can't stop the rain.

(Pause)

Do you even know what makes the rain Bobby?

**BOBBY**

I know it does. That's all I need to know.

**MILTON**

When it's hot, like today, the moisture in the air evaporates up into the clouds. When the clouds get so full they can't hold their water anymore, they rain it down on us.

**BOBBY**

Like pissing?

**MILTON**

You could look at it that way.

**BOBBY**

No I won't. What about when there's a storm?

**MILTON**

That means the clouds are angry.

**BOBBY**

Who they mad at?

**MILTON**

Me.

MILTON steps to BOBBY reaching back to slap BOBBY on the back of the head but stops, instead rubbing BOBBY'S head.

**BOBBY**

Milton if I show you something, will you promise to share?

BOBBY returns the radio and uncovers it. BOBBY turns knobs till it comes on.

What do I have here? I found it myself. It's a radio.

"The Hour of Decision" with Billy Graham plays on every channel.

Look, I tuned in Heaven on this bad boy.

MILTON crosses to the radio, puts on his glasses and looks at it closely.

**MILTON**

Then be careful, hold it like an angel.

The radio stops playing.

**BOBBY**

Shit!

BOBBY reaches over and hits it again.

**MILTON**

It's fragile. It looks like a Kennedy model 220 TRF receiver, two stages, regenerative.

**BOBBY**

How much money we get for it?

**MILTON**

I don't know, book value maybe three hundred.

**BOBBY**

Three hundred you talking about dollars right?

**MILTON**

Dollars.

**BOBBY**

We're rich we're rich. We are rich!

**MILTON**

They've got one in the broadcasting museum in St. Louis.

**BOBBY**

Maybe it's a PHILCO. Grandma Warren had her PHILCO for listening to her serial shows.

**MILTON**

That's impossible; PHILCO didn't start making radio receivers till 1927.

**BOBBY**

You sure, it looks like a PHILCO to me.

**MILTON**

I'm sure; this Kennedy was manufactured in 1922. The first official radio broadcast was on KDKA in Pittsburgh also in 1922. Actually inventor Lee de Forest probably engineered the first broadcast much earlier in 1910. Even though there weren't any radio receivers to pick it up. It featured a live musical presentation of Pagliacci, featuring Enrico Caruso from the Metropolitan Opera in New York City.

**BOBBY**

What the hell was that?

**MILTON**

What?

**BOBBY**

Do it again.

**MILTON**

Do what?

**BOBBY**

Talk about the radio; how do you do that?

**MILTON**

I don't know.

**BOBBY**

You know some good shit about that radio.

**MILTON**

This thing? It must be a thousand years old.

MILTON hits the radio and BOBBY protects it.

It doesn't even work.

**BOBBY**

It's worth three hundred dollars!

The radio plays Billy Graham.

**MILTON**

No kidding? Well if it tunes in heaven I'll buy it! You know Bobby; it would be worth it to find out.

**BOBBY**

Not till I get my three hundred dollars.

**MILTON**

If we could tune in Heaven on this radio we might hear something it would be nice to know.

**BOBBY**

Good shit like that, be worth four hundred dollars.

**MILTON**

You know, stuff they don't tell us till we get up there.

**BOBBY**

Like what?

**MILTON**

Well, like animal hearing.

**BOBBY**

Animal hearing? Hearing what?

**MILTON**

Everything we say and understanding it.

**BOBBY**

Who they gonna tell?

**MILTON**

I get to Heaven and find out my dog Buddy is an Einstein.

**BOBBY**

Shit!

**MILTON**

What if Saint Peter tells us during the orientation that God made us to fly like birds; only we ate too many potatoes and screwed it up?

**BOBBY**

Damn!

**MILTON**

That aerobics . . . has been brought to you by.

MILTON uses his fingers to make horns.

You know who.

**BOBBY**

My ass, I believe that!

**MILTON**

Or that Carol Channing...

**BOBBY**

Don't tell me.

**MILTON**

Is really a nice looking man!

**BOBBY**

Shit!

**MILTON**

How about every time you use a cuss word your Dick gets shorter.

BOBBY grabs his crotch.

**BOBBY**

Son of a bitch!

**MILTON**

Not a lot, just a little bit so you can't tell for a while. It could be, we don't know.

**BOBBY**

I don't want to know.

**MILTON**

Oh yes you do.

**BOBBY**

No I don't!

**MILTON**

What if it comes over the heavenly loud speaker that you lost a whole day of your life for every orgasm you had while you were alive?

**BOBBY**

Damn!

**MILTON**

Now that's something I'd a liked to know about.

**BOBBY**

Turn on that radio.

**MILTON**

What if we were supposed to live to a hundred, only there was that one piece of information we didn't get?

**BOBBY**

Hey! Women don't like sex and they live longer than men do.

**MILTON**

Now you're with me.

**BOBBY**

It's something to think about genius.

**MILTON**

Yeah, but what are you going to do about it?

**BOBBY**

Well.

(Pause)

I'll just have to die a young man!

**MILTON**

With a short Dick!

**BOBBY**

You'll have to take my word for it.

**MILTON**

You better go to church so you can find out if I was right.

**BOBBY**

Down at the "We all fall down" Mystic Temple, we believe in what they call Reincarnation. I'll get there eventually.

**MILTON**

Rein-what?

**BOBBY**

Reincarnation; it's like recycling.

**MILTON**

Do I have to stand out on the curb?

**BOBBY**

Gnaw! You see your body dies but your spirit lives on and comes back to earth as somebody else, some other time. Like say if you die right now, you being a good man you might come back in a hundred years as the Mayor of an intergalactic space colony.

**MILTON**

Do I get to wear a fancy uniform?

**BOBBY**

You the Mayor! You could have been on earth for lots of past lives, each time you come back you move up.

**MILTON**

If that's true, I'm not doing too good.

**BOBBY**

It's nothing to do with your looks or how much money you got, it's what you're like inside. Do ya have a good heart?

**MILTON**

I try.

**BOBBY**

The harder you try the closer you get.

**MILTON**

What do you get close to?

**BOBBY**

To that place.

**MILTON**

How will I know that place when I get there?

**BOBBY**

You'll know it all right. It looks like a big white house at the end of a long road. Inside it's cool as a breeze and toasty warm all at the same time. And there's plenty to eat and your Momma's there smiling and singing in the kitchen.

**MILTON**

(MILTON sings)

Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee.

**BOBBY**

It's a place where your daddy's says "good job son" and plays catch with you after supper. And in the summertime, the sun just hangs in the sky and waits for you till you get tired of running. It's where you go to bed happy every night and wake up knowing there ain't nothing you can't do. That's the place we trying to get to.

**MILTON**

There's no such place.

**BOBBY**

Got to be; I'm counting on it.

**MILTON**

When I get reincarnated, that's where I want to go.

**BOBBY**

They got plenty of room for you Milton, some forgiveness too.

Thunder rumbles in the distance with rain. MILTON starts to get nervous; he checks the large clock on the wall.

**MILTON**

Its four thirty Bobby, it's getting dark out. How long till we go home?

**BOBBY**

After we finish the job genius.

**MILTON**

Clouds want to piss on me.

**BOBBY**

It's just a little rain Milton; nothing to worry about I got you.

**MILTON**

Come on now.

BOBBY looks at some stuff carefully.

**BOBBY**

I wonder what we got here.

BOBBY tosses the stuff into the trash.

**MILTON**

What did you do that for?

**BOBBY**

I already got one.

BOBBY stops to think.

You know Milton; I might just throw away all this stuff and be like that Worm Digger.

**MILTON**

You said digger right, with a D?

**BOBBY**

Yeah, the Worm Digger.

**MILTON**

OK, but what about your money?

**BOBBY**

I'll give all this to you and then we'll sell your stuff.

**MILTON**

Will that make you like the Worm Digger?

**BOBBY**

I don't know, didn't know him that well.

**MILTON**

But he was a good man?

**BOBBY**

His broken down truck was his living room and his backyard.

**MILTON**

The "Worm Digger" I can see him in my mind.

**BOBBY**

We'd be on the side of our house and he'd try and find us kids hiding. Then we'd run after him and chase him down till he fell.

**MILTON**

He was tall, jet black hair, like Lancer from the TV show.

**BOBBY**

No man, he was all bent over, hair all over his back, clothes all tore up. He talked real sad, walked real mad and smelled real bad.

**MILTON**

OK, I see him now.

**BOBBY**

Everybody made fun of the "Worm Digger," all the usual stuff. Then one summer little Mazy Tate; she got heart sick, six years old. Her parents were poor and couldn't pay no doctors.

MILTON gets a big smile on his face.

**MILTON**

The Worm Digger was a secret millionaire and paid for the operation?

**BOBBY**

Well, somebody left ten thousand dollars on the Tate's back porch in rusted out coffee cans. You know who had rusted coffee cans on his old truck?

**MILTON**

The Worm Digger?

**BOBBY**

There's something bout a man who spends his life throwing and giving away. He didn't have two dimes for the dryer but he knew one thing most of us piled high won't ever know. The Worm Digger knew what stuff was for.

**MILTON**

I wish I knew what stuff was for so I could go home.

MILTON checks his pocket.

Give me a cigarette?

**BOBBY**

Do I look like Phillip Morris?

**MILTON**

The Worm Digger would give me one.

**BOBBY**

Shut up, I ain't had one since lunch.

BOBBY spots a cigarette butt on the floor and bends down to get it.

It's our lucky day Milton, I found us a butt. It's a big one too. Come here to papa, come here butt.

**MILTON**

Do you like a big butt, Bobby?

BOBBY turns to MILTON in anger.

**BOBBY**

In my neighborhood they kill you for saying shit like that! I was talking bout the cigarette butt I found.

**MILTON**

My hearing isn't as good as it used to be.

**BOBBY**

What you say that for man?

**MILTON**

I was just talking. Let me see.

**BOBBY**

Watch you're talking, I told you about that.

MILTON takes the butt from BOBBY, puts on his glasses and examines it closely.

**MILTON**

This is a fine butt, but this isn't an ordinary butt. I know what this is, this butt look funny to you?

**BOBBY**

I ain't talking to you; you give me the Hee-bee-gee-bees.

**MILTON**

My cousin Feeble had a butt like this; rolled at the ends, fat in the middle, smelled like burnt shit on its best day.

BOBBY tries to take it back, MILTON runs away and BOBBY follows.

**BOBBY**

That's mine!

**MILTON**

He walked around with a fist full of Slim Jim's and a smile.

**BOBBY**

Feeble ain't no nickname.

**MILTON**

No, his Christian name was "Feeble," cause when he was born he was so small and sick looking. His nickname was "Rhino" cause he turned out to be six foot four, 350 pounds, with a darn near perfect point at the end of his nose.

**BOBBY**

Let me see that.

BOBBY grabs the butt from MILTON.

I know what this is; let's light it up.

**MILTON**

But then we'd have to smoke it.

**BOBBY**

That's why they call you genius.

**MILTON**

I've never blown a reefer before.

**BOBBY**

How old are you?

**MILTON**

I'm not sure.

**BOBBY**

Don't make that face.

The thunder rumbles and MILTON starts to get scared, moving around.

**MILTON**

What if I OD? Or suck bong water up my nose?

**BOBBY**

Relax; I ain't gonna let nothing happen to you.

**MILTON**

The storm is getting closer.

**BOBBY**

Besides, you don't start to hallucinate Jerry Garcia till the third or fourth time. Sit down and help me with this.

MILTON and BOBBY light the roach and pass it. They sit quietly and ponder.

See, no effect at all.

**MILTON**

I don't feel a thing.

**BOBBY**

You know what the world needs Milton? Love. We should just love each other. Love love love, that's what we need.

**MILTON**

That's cool.

(Sings)

"If you're going to San Francisco, be sure to wear flowers in your hair."

**BOBBY**

(Sings)

"Up up and away in my beautiful balloon."

**MILTON**

I'm hungry Bobby, any pizza left?

**BOBBY**

No we ate it all you ate most of it. Why don't you go get us some more?

MILTON starts to get up.

Where you going?

**MILTON**

Get some pizza.

**BOBBY**

Sit down. It ain't nothing for me to kick a man's ass, like that bully kicked my ass.

**MILTON**

No way.

**BOBBY**

I know it's hard to believe. When I came home my Grandmother said, "Bobby Warren what in the world?" I said

"Grandma don't worry, once I get me some rest I'm going back to collect me some butt." Then she said.

**MILTON**

What did she say?

**BOBBY**

"When somebody does you a wrong, it ain't right to wrong em back. When someone hurts you, you do what love would do." You understand that?

**MILTON**

Yeah, but I'm still hungry.

**BOBBY**

You do what love would do.

**MILTON**

This one time Mrs. Doo-mar fixed me a big fat strawberry-rhubarb pie that I swear was illegal in ten states. She did what love would do too; that was illegal in every state.

**BOBBY**

You mean there really was a Mrs. Doo-mar?

**MILTON**

Have you ever seen that movie "The Graduate?"

(Pause)

It was kind of like that.

**BOBBY**

Who was this Mrs. Doo-mar, I thought you was a gay man?

**MILTON**

She was a widow lady that lived across the alley from my Aunt and Uncle's house in Fairhope. She came over to the fence one day and introduced herself. We got to know each other, talking about books and movies.

**BOBBY**

But did she see "The Summer of 42'?"

**MILTON**

It turns out she had. At first all I could see was her face and her ankles where the dog had chewed away the bottom of the fence. She sure had pretty ankles.

**BOBBY**

What else did she show you? Come on Milton!

**MILTON**

A gentleman doesn't talk about those things.

**BOBBY**

She showed you both of them?

**MILTON**

Well, let's just say that on one steamy night in the summer of 67'; there was more than one moon shinning over Mobile.

**BOBBY**

Mobile? I thought you said she lived in Fairhope?

**MILTON**

Did you want to know where she lived or where we had sex?

**BOBBY**

I already know where she lived.

MILTON starts slow and speeds up to a rapid-fire delivery.

**MILTON**

Well then for your information we did it on white leather seats, by the light of a Stuckey's billboard, in the back seat of a red 58' Pontiac, after I enlisted in the US Army, Mobile Alabama, July 3rd, 1967 from 8:25 to 8:39 PM central and it rained! It was a storm!

MILTON reacts to the thunder, wind and rain building outside.

**BOBBY**

Damn Milton, that's too fast, I didn't get all that.

**MILTON**

That's all right; I missed it the first time too.

MILTON looks up to heaven.

Mrs. Doo-mar you sure took real good care of me.

**BOBBY**

It sounds like she took you on as her personal project.

**MILTON**

And I liked to never get off.

(Pause)

She changed me forever, after that I knew.

**BOBBY**

What?

**MILTON**

Not to get involved with no more widow ladies. I mean what the hell was I doing, I'm a gay man!

The thunder, wind and rain grow louder and MILTON begins to freak running around the stage.

**MILTON**

Everybody knows that. I have to stay strong and pick up stuff from my knees.

**BOBBY**

You don't have to do all that right now.

**MILTON**

I should watch what I say, who I talk to. There's a lot to think about. Bobby that storm isn't coming, its here!

BOBBY races around checking the perimeter, then the side door.

**BOBBY**

Relax Milton I'll get the door. Be cool now keep it together.

**MILTON**

It's mad at me! Don't leave me alone!

MILTON runs, hides disappearing behind piles of stuff.

**BOBBY**

It's just a little water. I check the door it's locked. Nothings gonna get in here and get you. You don't have to worry about that with your old Bobby. When BOBBY returns he finds MILTON standing at attention holding the baseball bat like a rifle. MILTON whips around and yells at BOBBY.

**MILTON**

I believe you are late for roll call Private Warren? Attention!

**BOBBY**

(Amused)

You ain't called me that in a while Milton.

**MILTON**

Where have you been? What have you been doing?

**BOBBY**

(Nervous)

That's a good one, is this part of one of your new stories?

**MILTON**

I'll tell you a story dirt bag! Now suck it up soldier or I'll send you on a one-way trip to the end of the line.

**BOBBY**

Milton?

**MILTON**

Since when do you call a superior by his first name Private?

**BOBBY**

Sorry sir.

BOBBY leans into MILTON and whispers.  
BOBBY snaps to attention.

Sergeant Stack is that you?

**MILTON**

Check that fly boy. Stand up straight.

**BOBBY**

You haven't been around in a while Sergeant Stack.

**MILTON**

I've been busy Private, important work to be done regarding removal of private property from the public premises.

**BOBBY**

You left without telling us where you were going.

**MILTON**

No time son, duty calls.

**BOBBY**

Did it have anything to do with your accident?

**MILTON**

Accident?

**BOBBY**

You hurt your head sergeant.

**MILTON**

I don't remember any accident boy. Now stand up straight and don't give me any lip or I'll call your Momma.

(Pause)

You want me to call your Momma boy?

**BOBBY**

My Momma's dead.

**MILTON**

Just as well, I don't believe I have her number. What's your name again son?

**BOBBY**

Warren, Private Bobby Warren. We served together at Fort Campbell. Do you remember me?

**MILTON**

Warren? I remember, you couldn't read a lick. How does a man even get into the army not reading a lick?

**BOBBY**

You helped me sergeant; you covered for me.

**MILTON**

Why the hell would I do that?

**BOBBY**

We were friends sir.

**MILTON**

If I was your friend, I would have taught you how to read.

(Pause)

How's your momma Warren? I heard she wasn't feeling well?

**BOBBY**

She's still dead Sergeant.

**MILTON**

Sorry to hear that son.

**BOBBY**

Sergeant there's something I've wanted to tell you for a while.

**MILTON**

Don't want to hear about naked women now son, I'm tired.

**BOBBY**

This is important.

**MILTON**

At ease soldier.

**BOBBY**

I want you to know the truth. It's been weighing on me.

**MILTON**

I loved the army.

**BOBBY**

I know but you was hurt bad Sergeant.

(Pause)

It wasn't your fault.

**MILTON**

You've lost your credibility private; everybody knows I fell coming over that wall. Falling is my fault; nobody can fall for you son. The report was clear; if the army says it's true it must be so.

**BOBBY**

You didn't fall Sergeant Stack.

**MILTON**

Were you there?

**BOBBY**

Yes sir.

There are loud thunderclaps. The rain and wind increase. MILTON scrambles.

**MILTON**

If I didn't fall private, what happened to me?

**BOBBY**

Somebody hurt you.

Loud banging sounds like hail hitting against a metal building.

**MILTON**

In coming! Take cover private, the enemy is approaching.

**BOBBY**

Sergeant Stack you can't be out front. They're coming up the walk. You got to hide so they can't find you. Right now you should run from who you are. I can't fight em by myself. Cover your face with your hands protect yourself. It's OK, let's run Milton!

The storm builds higher. MILTON runs and hides behind stuff. BOBBY steps out to center stage holding the baseball bat snapping to attention, he is agitated and scared.

Private first class Robert Warren sir, it sure is a fine night for a walk. Yes sir it is fucking raining. No I'm not stupid, not at all Sergeant Gary. No, Sergeant Stack is not in the barracks right now. I haven't seen him since we got back from town. Maybe you can come back later. I'll tell him you stopped by.

BOBBY steps forward and changes his tone to a mean southern drawl. He turns and speaks to the audience.

I happen to know that Sergeant Stack is in there Private. The fact is we all know he's in there. That he's been seen in town with a known transvestite by the name of Maureen, sometimes called amazing, engaging in activities that bring dishonor to the uniform of the United States Army. Now I told em not to promote that faggot! They should have listened to me.

BOBBY drops his head.

He don't mean nothing. I mean he ain't bothering nobody. He is different than some but he keeps it to himself. You wouldn't know it to look at him; he's just like you and me.

BOBBY changes to a mean southern drawl. He speaks to the audience.

He is not like me. No fucking way he's like me! But maybe he is like you. Are you his private prick private? I think you're a couple, a couple of queers! I'm sending a message private, you get my message boy? Weakness is contagious! You and your friend, you're what's wrong with my army!

BOBBY drops his head.

I love the Army too, I'm not like that, and that's not me. You can ask anybody that knows Bobby Warren, he ain't a fag!

BOBBY speaks to the audience.

Well then, if you're not like him, then you must be like us?

BOBBY takes the bat from his shoulders and puts it behind his back. When MILTON walks out BOBBY moves toward MILTON as if he has been pushed.

**MILTON**

Bobby I've been looking all over for you.

(Stops)

I need my gloves. You've had em for a week now.

(Pause)

Hey, what are you guys doing?

BOBBY takes the bat from behind his back, swings it at MILTON knocking him down. BOBBY then alternates throwing the stuff from his pile off stage while hitting and kicking MILTON as he cries out his monologue. Near the end, overwhelmed, BOBBY drops to his knees.

**BOBBY**

Milton be careful what you tell folks, you don't know what they got in their hearts. People make judgments, it ain't right but they do it! When somebody shakes your hand, shake it strong. You never know when a person is looking to see if you're strong! Prejudice is like a bad itch in the middle of your back, you know it's there but you can't see it; it's hard to reach. My mules eat dirt and piss mud and thank me! Why don't you go out and play with the other girls? You ain't natural! You don't belong! That ain't me, I'm not like that.

BOBBY gets up and angrily pushes imaginary attackers away with his bat.

That's enough! Get away from him! I said get back! It's not funny no more!

BOBBY breaks down, drops the bat and crawls to MILTON crumpled on the floor. Bobby covers MILTON to protect him.

It's just a little rain that's all. Come on now.

(Pause)

What they were saying weren't true. But you can't take a chance, people getting the wrong idea. There were too many of them, I couldn't stop it.

(Cries out)

I didn't stop it!

BOBBY gets up and dusts himself off.

How long we know each other Milton?

(Pause)

It's you're old pal Bobby, I'm here for you brother, now and always. You believe that don't you?

The storm fades. MILTON and BOBBY, after the retelling of this tragic event have switched places. MILTON is now the caretaker and BOBBY the child. BOBBY resets the breaker and the lights come up slowly. MILTON wakes, spots the broken lamp and jumps to his feet.

**MILTON**

Shit! Who broke Mr. Price's fancy lamp? I'm not paying for that.

**BOBBY**

I didn't mean for it to happen.

**MILTON**

Bullshit, you never liked that lamp.

**BOBBY**

It was an accident.

**MILTON**

An accident?

**BOBBY**

That's right.

BOBBY picks up the pieces of the lamp and hands them to MILTON.

**MILTON**

OK. Well then all you got to do is tell the truth and give somebody a chance to forgive you.

**BOBBY**

I'm sorry Milton.

MILTON takes the lamp pieces and puts them back together.

**MILTON**

You see that, good as new.

(Pause)

Listen there, it stopped raining. Everything will be cool and green now.

**BOBBY**

That's good isn't it?

MILTON checks the large clock.

**MILTON**

Look at that, six thirty, we made it Bobby. You can keep all this stuff and I can start my new job.

**BOBBY**

What kind of new job?

**MILTON**

Working for Michael Price Media, I told you about that.

**BOBBY**

Gnaw.

**MILTON**

Sure I did, you just don't remember.

**BOBBY**

Tell me again.

**MILTON**

Mr. Price called on that phone over there.

**BOBBY**

When?

**MILTON**

While you were talking a piss.

**BOBBY**

There ain't no bathroom.

**MILTON**

That's why Mr. Price called; he's putting one in, along with some other stuff.

**BOBBY**

Where?

**MILTON**

Here, he wants me to help him with his new theater.

**BOBBY**

Why?

**MILTON**

He's going to have folks coming up from Alabama and he needs me to know how to talk to em.

**BOBBY**

Will he pay you money?

**MILTON**

Some to start and then we'll see, you know, incentives.

**BOBBY**

Is this a for sure?

**MILTON**

I'll be vested in a 401K with three percent matching funds.

BOBBY hands the lamp back to MILTON.

**BOBBY**

When you see Mr. Price give him this. Tell him I'm sorry about his lamp.

**MILTON**

You can tell him yourself, he'll be here any minute.

BOBBY grabs his bat and some things and starts to exit. MILTON stops him.

**BOBBY**

He's coming here? I better go; I don't know what to say.

**MILTON**

You can't go; you're staying here with me.

**BOBBY**

Me?

**MILTON**

Yeah you.

(Pause)

I'm going to tell Mr. Price that if he wants Mr. Stack, he better count on me bringing my assistant Mr. Warren. Don't worry; I'll take care of you Bobby, now and always.

**BOBBY**

Is that true?

**MILTON**

You just let me do the talking. We're a team; that true?

**BOBBY**

(Smiles)

Yeah that's right, if you can't count on your friends.

**MILTON**

What you going to do?

BOBBY drops his things and tries to straighten and clean himself up.

**BOBBY**

Should I go wait for him outside?

**MILTON**

Sure.

**BOBBY**

Make a good first impression, huh Milton?

BOBBY exits. MILTON stands holding the lamp on an empty stage.

**MILTON**

I'll stay and watch the lamp.

**BOBBY**

(Off stage)

Roll Tide.

**MILTON**

Big Orange!

MILTON pauses and looks around at the now bare stage.

Empty is beautiful.

The stage lights go dark. MILTON holds the now lighted lamp. Dedication scrolls the front of the wardrobe.

Dedicated to Pfc Barry Winchell, Fort Campbell Kentucky. In July 1999, three months after "Stuff" was first produced as a workshop production, Pfc. Winchell was bludgeoned to death with a baseball bat by two of his fellow soldiers because of his sexual orientation.

**THE END**

**"STUFF"**

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"Equal the world" (15)